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SERBIAN NEWS MAGAZINES IN TRANSITION AND NEED FOR LIFE-LONG JOURNALISTS EDUCATION (NIN and VREME case study)^a

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the structure of the editorial board of Serbian (weekly) news magazines and the level of education of the journalists employed in these editorial boards through the analysis of a questionnaire on the attitudes and education of journalists in Serbian news magazines, as well as to determine their correlates. On a sample of 43 respondents (more than a half of the employees in the two most influential Serbian news magazines – NIN and Vreme), the study analyzes the correlation of knowledge and skills of Serbian journalists, as well as the requirements that contemporary online journalism places before the media workers. The following items are singled out as the most important elements of the analysis: the surveyed journalists have a lower level of education than the average of Serbian journalists and in most cases they have secondary education, while in 90 percent of the cases they do not have any journalism education; the journalists who participated in the survey have a very high opinion of their education and skills needed for work in most cases, while the percentage of correct answers regarding the questions pertaining to their field of knowledge is very low. Modern job positions that have existed in international magazines for a long time are not yet present in the local media companies, and the largest number of the interviewed journalists have no experience with online journalism, which indicates that the human resources for developing the online editions of Serbian weekly magazines cannot be found among the existing members of the editorial board; instead, new experts whose education should be constantly updated throughout their career need to be hired.

Key words: education, journalists, news magazines, online, structure of editorial board

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СРПСКИ НЕДЕЉНИЦИ У ТРАНЗИЦИЈИ И ПОТРЕБА ЗА ЦЕЛОЖИВОТНИМ ОБРАЗОВАЊЕМ НОВИНАРА – (студија случаја НИН И ВРЕМЕ)

Апстракт

Циљ овог рада представља испитивање структуре редакција српских њуз магазина, као и нивоа образовања новинара запослених у овим редакцијама, кроз анализу Упитника о ставовима новинара и образовању новинара у српским њуз магазинима, као и одређивање њихових корелата. На примеру 43 испитаника (више од половине запослених у два најутицајнија српска њуз магазина- НИН и Време), у раду се анализира и корелација знања и способности које поседују српски новинари и потреба које савремено новинарство на мрежи поставља пред медијске раднике. Као најзначајнији елементи анализе издвајају се следеће ставке: анкетирани новинари су мање образовани од српског новинарског просека и у највећем броју случајева имају завршену средњу школу, а у чак 90 одсто случајева немају образовање новинарског усмерења; новинари који су учествовали у истраживању у највећем броју случајева имају изузетно високо мишљење о свом образовању и способности за рад, док на питањима из области знања показују изузетно низак проценат тачних одговора. Савремене позиције које одавно постоје у светским магазинима још увек нису присутне у домаћим медијским кућама, а највећи број новинара који су анкетирани нема никакво искуство у он-лајн новинарству, што указује да се људски ресурси за развијање он-лајн издања српских недељника вести не могу пронаћи међу постојећим члановима редакције, већ се морају упослити нови стручњаци на чијем би се образовању радило активно током читавог њиховог радног века.

Кључне речи: образовање, транзиција новинари, њуз магазини, он-лајн

INTRODUCTION

Overproduction of journalists in Serbia, even with (in global terms) extremely large number of media outlets per capita in recent years, has led to the situation that a large number of journalists (according to the data from www.novinari.rs, over 3,000) fail to find employment. As there is no single database of journalists in Serbia that would be comprehensive and widely accepted, the number of journalists working in the country is estimated to be from 6,000 to over 10,000, which means that between one third and one half of the journalists have no possibility to pursue their profession and of earn a living from it. Nevertheless, there are 12 faculties in Serbia where journalism can be studied.

Although little has changed since the Pulitzer wrote that “intelligence requires development” (Pulitzer, 1904, p. 1), the present journalist cannot afford not to keep up with the latest developments in hardware and software, as the readers are becoming increasingly educated. News magazines are the most influential segment of the print media, which are generally read by policy makers and the most educated part of the audience (Lukić, 1970), so

it is clear that these media have a special kind of responsibility towards its audience. "Online journalism is confronted with a new profile of journalists – internet journalists – and with the new e-reader. An Internet journalist is a computer-literate online journalist who organizes and writes the online edition of the Media" (Tapavički Duronjić, 2011, p. 200). Andrew Boyd (2002, p. 3) refers to these journalists as multimedia journalists, i.e. reporters who are multiply trained, as one journalist performs at least three jobs (work for radio, television, and the web edition) for the price of one, which does not illicit much enthusiasm from journalists due to the heavy work load. Everyday training and lifelong learning should be imperative for journalists who nowadays want to meet the increasingly demanding expectations of the audience on the Internet. "In the United Kingdom but also elsewhere, media publishers are increasingly building digital mechanized factories that are equipped so that the content can be fed a variety of media platforms, all day, all week. Newspapers are extended in the area of real-time video, while broadcasters expand the supply of textual content. This process of convergence within the industry is driven by the relentless pursuit of productivity and cost efficiency" (Currah, 2009, p. 6).

In the altered reality, consumers of information partially assume the role of producer or performer of the information, which in turn creates a false picture of equating the value of professional journalist and amateur-volunteer. However, in a blizzard of information in which we live today, we do need an interpreter of information and a gate keeper who, with their knowledge and experience, selects the most important parts for their audience. "In order to deftly navigate the unimaginably large jungle of information that annually increases by 30%, personal experiences acquired by the vocational training to build the necessary IT skills are necessary. They are acquired by information literacy in the process of lifelong learning" (Vitković, 2007, p. 25). The average consumer of information increasingly needs someone to provide him with the right information about the information that floods him and the information about which information is relevant and interesting to the everyday life, because living with constant, round-the-clock, news, a man "without the media and the journalists can easily get lost in the information blizzard" (Radojković & Stojković 2004, p. 176).

Hermans, Vergir and d'Haenens point out that "the production and circulation of news is no longer an exclusive task of the journalist. Journalism professional roles require attitudes that differ from the traditional role of gate keeper and move more toward activities such as interpretation and reflection. Another consequence of technological innovation is that convergence happens in media production as well as at the organizational level" (Hermans, Vergeer, d'Haenens, 2009. p. 140). For several years, in the international media there has been a sharp decline in the number of copy editors or organizer editors, which resulted in poor texts that are less customized to online publications and contain more spelling and grammar

mistakes. Editors are all burdened by having to examine several texts during the day, which means that each text is given less time. “Nurturing talent requires labour, capital, expertise, and investment. It requires complex infrastructure of traditional media – reporters, agents, editors, publishers, technology support staff, people in marketing” (Keen, 2008, p. 31).

The role of journalists cannot remain unchanged at a time when changes are taking place in society and in journalism, which we saw in the late 20th and early 21st century. Nevertheless, in addition to merely promoting interactivity, the new technologies will force journalists to redefine the concept of their profession. A study conducted in 2010 by nine university researchers across Europe showed that, in the case of 239 journalists (print and online editions) from 40 editorial departments from 11 European countries, the professional identities of journalists are still rooted in print media (Sarrica et al., 2010, p. 413). This is exactly what the results of the questionnaires completed by the journalists of Serbian news magazines suggest.

METHOD

We used a small, methodically selected, sample, which consisted of journalists of news magazines *Vreme* and *NIN* who volunteered to participate in completing a questionnaire on the attitudes of journalists and education of journalists in Serbian news magazines.

News weeklies *NIN* and *Vreme* were chosen as examples of two types of news magazines in Serbia – *NIN* is the oldest weekly news magazine in Serbia still in circulation, it is foreign-owned and traditionally oriented, while *Vreme* is owned by the journalists who work for it and is civic-minded. Both magazines are of great importance for the development of political and public life in Serbia, because they both pleaded (and still do) to create public opinion in Serbia. As the theory of journalism says that the most influential segment of the print media is the one that speaks to decision makers and the most educated part of the public, it is clear that it is of paramount importance to investigate the level of education and the need for further training of journalists who create these magazines.

A criterion for the selection of respondents was the work in the analyzed News magazines in a journalist job position (photographers, secretaries, and other non-journalistic staff were not taken into account). Journalists completed the questionnaire in their home newsrooms during working hours in the period from 22 November 2013 to 5 December 2013. Management of these media was sent a letter containing all the information on the purpose and the implementers of the research, and the journalists completed the surveys after obtaining permission from their superiors to participate in this study. The questionnaire was submitted to the respondents in printed form and respondents themselves filled in the questionnaire in the presence of the author of this paper.

Questions were numerically coded and analyzed. Different groups of information were obtained from the questionnaire: personal information, past behaviour and previous journalistic practice, information about the possible future behaviour, and information about the respondents' views. The questionnaire showed a very wide range of information on the respondents and provided detailed information. A combination of open and closed questions was used, whereby the open questions were used only in situations where the offered answers were too large or ineffective (age, years working in journalism, years in online media, and similar demographic data). The questionnaire did not offer combined questions, in which the respondent had the ability to change his answer if he was not satisfied with the offered questions, in order to facilitate the processing of obtained data. The questionnaire consists of 26 questions, of which two questions concerning their attitudes contain 17 statements, which they were asked to rate according to the level of agreement with the given statements. When evaluating the attitudes and opinions of the respondents, we used a Likert scale with 5 divisions and the option 'I am undecided' was offered. We used a bipolar scale only for issues for which there was no middle option, while in some of them, in order to avoid forced distribution, a third option was provided ('Maybe, I'm not sure' or 'Maybe, if it would be a condition for further employment').

During the analysis, *NIN* magazine employed 18 people in the newsroom, including 12 journalists. This magazine employs three permanent freelancers who work in the newsroom, nine permanent part-time workers who work outside the newsroom (work from home), and 40 occasional part-time co-workers. Time magazine employed 39 people in the same year, including 22 journalists. The editorial staff had more than 30 people, i.e. freelance journalists. Men and women were almost equally represented among the journalists of analyzed newsrooms: 53.49% men and 46.51% women. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 43 respondents, which covered more than a half of all employed journalists in both newsrooms.

RESULTS

Level of education. Most respondents have secondary education – 46.51%, while 41.86% have a university degree. 9.3% have professional college education, and one respondent has an MA or PhD degree (2.33%).

Professional education. In the total sample, only 11.63% of respondents studied journalism. If we observe only the university-educated group, the only ones who can in fact have journalistic education, we see that 22.22% of them have graduated from a faculty of a journalistic profile. If we compare these results with the results of the survey "Profession at the Crossroads – Journalism at the doorstep of the information society",

which was conducted in Serbia in the period from July 2010 to June 2011 on a general sample of 260 journalists, we see that journalists from our analyzed news magazines have a lower level of formal education than the average journalist population. According to this study, the formal education of journalists was predominantly university education, and 31.92% of journalists had journalist-specific education.

Age and length of service in journalism. The average age of the respondents was 45.6 years. For easier analysis of variables, the respondents were divided into those aged under 40 and those 41 and over, and there are 18 (41.9%) in the former and 25 (58.1%) in the latter category. Only four journalists under 30 years of age were working in these news magazines.

The respondents have worked as journalists from 1 to 43 years, and the average period of their work in journalism was 18 years. 18.6% of the respondents worked up to five years in journalism, while the majority (46.5%) worked from 6 to 20 years. Deuze and Paulussen (2002, p. 242) constructed the profile of the first generation of journalists working exclusively for online media in the Netherlands and Flanders, and they indicate that these journalists turn to new technologies and that they are dedicated to their audience. The journalists they surveyed were relatively young (90% of them were younger than 35), educated, experienced (a quarter of them had more than 10 years of work experience in the media), and to almost 70% of the journalists online journalism is not the first job they had in the media.

Length of service in news magazines and online magazines. Our respondents were at the time employed in the news magazine in question from 0.6 years to 23 years and the average length of service was 9.2 years. The largest number of journalists in the news magazines were employed for 11 years or longer (37.21% of them), and 34.88% between 3 and 10 years. Unlike their European counterparts, the journalists employed in the analyzed news magazines had experience in online media in the range from 0.6 to 7 years, and the average length of their service was 1.2 years. Up to 67.42% had no online work experience. This confirms the hypothesis that journalists from the analyzed news magazines lack experience in working in an online environment.

Earnings and satisfaction with salary. The data indicate a polarization in wages – almost 2/3 of the respondents received a salary up to 40,000 dinars, while others received a salary higher than 60,000 dinars. A relatively high percentage of over 30% of those with a salary lower than 20,000 dinars, and who are full-time employees in the news magazines, indicates the minimum wage that these journalists earn working in some of the most prestigious media. If we take into account the fact that the average net salary in Serbia in September 2013 was 42,866 dinars, we can conclude that the largest number of surveyed journalists received a salary lower than the national average. None of the participants was extremely satisfied with his earnings, and most of them were dissatisfied with their salary –

41.86% moderately and 25.58% highly. These data support the hypothesis that the analyzed news media do not possess sufficient financial resources needed to further their development by following global trends in this field, and that there is no motivation for employees to undergo self-training and further education.

Knowledge and attitudes of the respondents about their own education. 86% of the respondents believed that they have adequate education, while only 4.65% moderately disagreed with the statement that they have a proper education, whereas 9.30% were undecided. None of the participants answered that they strongly disagree with the statement that they have the appropriate qualifications for the job. Such a high opinion of their own education and its adequacy for their job was not substantiated with answers to the knowledge questions. Although 95% of the respondents believe that their computer literacy fits the needs of contemporary journalism, only 18.6% of them answered correctly to the question 'What is the Citizendium?', and the largest number of respondents, 44.2%, thought that it was a social network. With the expectation that the result would be different, we conducted a chi-square test that set the hypothesis by which it was expected that the agreement between the answers to these two questions would be important. The calculated value of the chi-square test of .706 revealed that the level of agreement is contrary than expected and that the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Regarding their knowledge of professional journalist terms, rules, and situations, the respondents showed an unexpectedly low percentage of correct answers. For example, when asked whether they have ever broken any copyright law or journalistic code, in most cases they said that they were not sure. When asked about the definition of intellectual property rights, only 9.3% of the respondents answered correctly. It is also indicative that only 11.8% of those who claim to have never violated copyright law or code of journalism knew what intellectual property is. None of the respondents who answered that they had never violated the law or the code answered correctly to the question about the definition of intellectual property rights.

The respondents' high opinion of their own education was also not justified by the skills they have or their answers to the question whether they know how to use computer programs. Specifically, 46.5% of the journalists did not know how to use any image, audio, or video editing software, and it was precisely this group of journalists which rated their computer literacy with a 4 and a 5 in almost 100% of the cases. 9.3% of the respondents said they were able to use the software for audio processing, and 30.2% an image editing software. 4.7% of the journalists knew how to use two or all three of these programs. In the previous three years only 19% of the journalists attended a school, a seminar, or a course in which they acquired new knowledge or skills for using computers and new technologies, software, or applications.

Attitude towards online work. The answers to the question whether they would work only for an online service of their news magazine were balanced with 51.16% for and 48.83% against. One of the main reasons for rejecting the transition to online newsroom can be seen in the answer to the question 'Do you need additional skills/knowledge to work in the online edition of your news magazine?' to which 51.16% of the respondents replied affirmatively. From the question 'Would you be willing to finance the acquisition of these skills yourself?' we saw that continued employment may be an incentive to self-finance the acquisition of new knowledge (41.86%), while 34.87% would not finance this activity themselves.

In order to determine the possible motives for work in online newsrooms, a set of questions were asked aimed at determining the attitudes about the importance of journalists in the field of online media, its relationship with the reader, its significance in relation to the journalists of the traditional media, as well as the confidence that exists between the audience and the new types of media.

58.14% of the respondents believed that the relationship between readers and journalists in the online magazine (ONM) is more direct than in the print media. However, more than a half of the journalists (51.18%) believed that readers prefer to read the important news in print than in the online edition. Up to 76.74% of the journalists thought that readers believed more in print than in online media, even within the same media company. It is important to note that among the journalists who would not agree to work for the ONM in their media company, 71.4% of them thought that readers believed more in the print than in the online edition, even within the same media company.

93.02% of the respondents thought that the latest technical developments radically change the way people consume information, while 72.08% of them considered writing for online media to be different from writing for print editions. 46.5% of them agreed that their communication with the readers of the magazine in which they work changed in the age of the Internet. 74.41% of the journalists employed in the analyzed news magazines thought that online journalists, as compared to journalists of print editions, are more concerned with fabricating information instead of creating it. Among the journalists who would not agree to work only for the online service of their media company, 95% of them believed that the online journalists are more concerned with fabricating information instead of creating it.

What is worrying is the fact that there are a large number of journalists in Serbia (60.45%) who do not think their role in the age of the Internet is growing in importance, as shown in the previous sections on how the role of all types of gate keepers increases in importance in this day and age. These data suggest that journalists are not aware of the (increasing) significance of the role they play in today's society.

DISCUSSION

Giving the profile of the first generation of journalists who only work for online media in the Netherlands and Flanders, Mark Deuze and Steve Paulussen noted that the analyzed newsrooms of online journalism have from three to five editors. The analyzed Serbian news magazines have neither a journalist nor an online editor whose task is to deal exclusively with online content. Lindsay Oberst (2011) mentioned eleven occupations which the development of journalism will most likely introduce to the labour market. Journalists and their newsrooms should consider these jobs, because many of them may already exist, but are given new names, while others, which do not yet exist, should be introduced in the systematization because it would facilitate the work of editors and provide additional quality content to consumers. Some of the future occupations are: headline optimizer, social media reporter – aggregator, story scientist, data detective, curator-in-chief, explanatory journalist, E-book creator, web developer, etc. The analyzed news media in Serbia do not have an online editor or editorial division of occupations adapted to the digital world.

Over the last decade, in many newsrooms all over the world a lot has been done to create a new job – social networks editor (the actual names vary – online coordinator, a social networks specialist, a social networks project producer, etc.). The question of why the media need to connect with Facebook, Twitter, and similar social networks becomes redundant if one looks at the figures from previous years. While most well-known media sites have a decreased number of unique visits, social networks record an increase in the hundreds of percent. Therefore, it is necessary to train all employees in a media organization working on journalistic material to properly use the opportunities provided by social groups, because this cannot be a one-man job (editor).

One of the problems is how to adapt the educational system quickly enough to the changes occurring in the media and to allow journalists to gain practical knowledge that will be needed in the newsrooms, which experience changes each year under the influence of society and the use of new ICT.

The global profile of an online journalist indicates that he is no older than 35, well-educated, and has more than 10 years of media experience, and data from the analysis of domestic news magazines indicate that in the Serbian newsrooms the largest number of employees have completed only secondary education, that almost 90% have no formal journalistic education, and that the average journalist of a Serbian news magazine is less educated than the average journalist in Serbia. The average age of journalists in the analyzed magazines was 45.6, and only four journalists were not older than 30. Journalists of domestic news magazines on average have only 1.2 years of experience in online media, and 67% of them do not have any online work experience. All these data indicate that

human resources for developing online editions cannot be found among the existing members of the newsroom and that new experts must be hired.

Functional media literacy “covers a wide spectrum of human existence – from mastering elementary skills of recognition and interpretation of visual symbols and advertisements, via reading skills and completing charts and forms, to a much higher level, such as the use of computers for information, understanding relation between sign and meaning, intention and message, emotional and cognitive response to what media announced. Modern technology means constant new opportunities in the media industry and constant new requirements for education of media users” (Crnogorac, 2008, p. 86). The theory of communication usually implies that media literacy is necessary only at the other end of the communication process, i.e. with the message recipient; it is often forgotten that it is most needed primarily for the professional communicator, i.e. journalist, who bears most of the responsibility for the running of the communication process, especially in today’s changed reality. Media literacy should be part of formal (school) education, with the ultimate goal of creating media consumers who are not only able to understand the received message, but also to observe it critically, analyze it, compare it with other messages, make conclusions accordingly, socialize in this way, and also have the opportunity and ability to participate in the production of media messages. It is precisely these areas that are listed in the recommendations adopted at the UNESCO conference on “Education for the Media and the Digital Age”, held in Vienna in April 1999. A total of 33 countries concluded that “the media education is part of the fundamental rights of every citizen, in every country of the world, and includes the freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy” (UNESCO, 1999, p. 2). All these segments should be interpreted from the perspective of journalists whose lifelong education and training should transform them from universal ignoramuses and equip them for analysis, interpretation, and critical reflection of events, phenomena, and people about which they need to report to the public.

Journalists of analyzed magazines do not accept that their education, knowledge, and skills are not adequate for contemporary journalism and are predominantly unaware of their own ignorance. “I consider an IT literate person, above all, to be the one who recognizes that their information literacy is necessary because the process is never completed – it is only the necessity and the manner of its fulfilment that is reshaping [...] Information literacy has for years been treated as a necessity of the modern age – books have been written about it, standards published, rules made, institutions established, but it is usually understood as technological literacy and not as a multifaceted research process of permanent education, as a new model of creative thinking” (Vraneš, 2008, pp. 114-115).

Therefore, the first step would be to confront journalists with the level of their knowledge, and then develop creative training that would

allow journalists to acquire additional knowledge and skills that would enable them to keep up with digital journalism, in parallel with their job (so that their existence would not be endangered). Likewise, new job systematization, which would be harmonized with the actual needs, new rules, which would be the basis for the new members of the newsroom, and mentorship work, which would function as a fixed process, would be a step forward in the quality of the composition of Serbian media newsrooms.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Education Portal, 2013), in the period from 2012 to 2022 there will be a decrease of jobs for journalists and correspondents of up to 14%, which will be even more prominent in the local media given the sensitivity of the Serbian market. This means that only the best of them will have a chance to fight to keep their job, proving that they are essential through the quality of their work, which is unimaginable in the new journalism without a broad general education and a high level of professional knowledge. Many foreign universities offer so-called educational courses without diplomas, so journalists, for example, at Columbia Journalism School's Continuing Education Program, can be educated in the fields that likely did not exist at the time when the currently active journalists studied, such as digital design or multimedia storytelling, but also in interesting fields of journalism that are always worth perfecting, such as investigative journalism and reporting on crises and conflicts. The study conducted by Schultz in 2002 showed that students who majored in journalism were most often able to find a job in large media corporations and to work in higher journalistic positions. Unlike the American continent (MacDonald, 2006), Serbia has not yet launched a wider social debate on the method, purpose, and quality of training journalists for journalism as "an open profession" or even a craft (Joseph, 2009, p. 47), and there are no clearly defined reasons why journalism should not be seen as more of an occupation for which the talent is sufficient than an academic discipline that creates future analysts and brokers of information (de Burgh, 2003). On the contrary, there is a public image of journalism as a profession in which everyone can 'try their luck' (indeed it is often a 'test profession' – if it fails, one can always 'move' to another one), and the ties that should 'connect' 'professionals' to their profession, such as graduation and membership in a professional organization, are very loose (Cook, 2005). The licensing of journalists, one of the few topics of public debate, is just one of the segments (for those countries where it exists – most Asian countries, Italy) that contribute to the development of the profession in this context; however, it limits other segments of journalistic work. Although the number of educational institutions in this area and the increasing number of students who want to enrol in journalism studies each year should argue in favour of the quality of educated personnel in Serbia, the research conducted for this study revealed that, in general, a small number of journalists with academic journalistic education are employed in the leading print media, and that a very small percentage of them invest in their knowledge and training

during their career. This trend in Serbia is in contrast with the trend e.g. in the United Kingdom, which in 2007 recorded a quintuple increase of students of journalism during a ten-year period, which resulted in a significantly greater number of highly-educated journalists who were in the newsroom (Hanna Sanders 2007, p. 404). However, we noted a similar trend in the United States, where, despite the increase in the number of students of journalism and mass communication, there is no record of an upward trend of these professionals in newsrooms (Weaver et al., 2006, p. 35).

Therefore it is clear that “joint activity, synergy of the academic community in the region, and a change of the education system, the journalists themselves, and the media in order to adapt the entire media system to the social reality and the public interest” (Kljajić, 2013, p. 24) are a necessity, and that “joint efforts [must be made] to create a new media culture and a new media paradigm as a response to complex social change” (ibid, p. 25). Because it is precisely “journalism and educational programs that enable people to rehearse and build their journalistic skills [that] are a key tool for supporting the democratic principles that are the basis of development of each country” (UNESCO, 2007, p. 5).

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СРПСКИ НЕДЕЉНИЦИ У ТРАНЗИЦИЈИ И ПОТРЕБА ЗА ЦЕЛОЖИВОТНИМ ОБРАЗОВАЊЕМ НОВИНАРА – (студија случаја НИН И ВРЕМЕ)

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Резиме

Економски исцрпљена српска штампа (нарочито недељници), заглављена у процесу између незавршене транзиције, и очекивања информационог друштва (част ретким изузецима), веома споро мобилише своје ресурсе у одговору на но-

ве професионалне изазове. Медијска криза наставља да се продубљује, узрокујући неизбежну кризу већ деградиране новинарске професије.

У таквим околностима, новинари су приморани да раде на што више платформи у исто време и са истим финансијским ефектом и са углавном истим (недовољним) ресурсима. Истраживања спроведена за потребе ове студије показују неочекивано лоше резултате, обзиром да се ради о два најстарија и најутицајнија недељника у Србији. Највећи број запослених новинара је завршио средњу школу (46,51 %), док универзитетску диплому има 41,86 %. У поређењу са резултатима истраживања „Професија на раскршћу – новинарство на прагу информационог друштва“ које је спроведено у периоду јул 2010–јун 2011, на репрезентативном узорку од 260 новинара, можемо закључити да новинари анализираних недељника имају ниже формално образовање у односу на новинарски просек. Додатни проблем представља чињеница да ни један новинар није изјавио да се изразито не слаже са изјавом да има одговарајуће квалификације за посао који обавља. Тако високо мишљење о сопственом образовању и његовој адекватности за посао који обављају, новинари међутим нису подржали одговорима на питањима знања. Ситуација је слична и са он-лајн вештинама и знањем о новим технологијама, али на жалост и са основним постулатима новинарске етике и законским уређењем професије. Додатни проблем је чињеница да велики проценат новинара у Србији (60.45 %) не сматра да њихова улога у времену интернета расте, а као што је претходно показано улога „чуvara капија“ у данашње време расте. Ови подаци упућују и на то да новинари нису свесни (растуће) важности њихове улоге у данашњем друштву. У поређењу са светским искуствима и истраживањима у овој области, види се да су српски недељници и њихови новинари далеко од европског просека, нарочито по питању образовања, знања о новим технологијама, али и по питању организације редакције. Анализирани њуз магазини у Србији немају он-лајн уреднике нити занимања прилагођена дигиталном свету. У којем треба да (пре)живе у долазећим годинама и декадама.

У Србији још увек није покренута шира социјална дебата о методама, сврси и квалитету образовања новинара као „отворене професије“ или чак заната (Joseph, 2009:47) и нема јасно дефинисаних разлога зашто новинари треба да буду сматрани за нешто више од позива за који је довољан таленат, већ је потребна академска дисциплина која ствара будуће аналитичаре и информационе брокере (de Burgh, 2003). Напротив, јавност има слику о новинарству као о професији у којој се свако може опробати (често се назива „пробна професија“ – уколико пропадне, може се „прећи“ на нешто друго). Нити које треба да „повежу“ професионалце са њиховом професијом, као што су дипломирање и припадање професионалним организацијама су веома слабе (Cook, 2005).

Стога, кључно питање за будућност је како да се образовни систем довољно брзо адаптира на промене које се дешавају у медијима и како да дозволи новинарима да стекну практична знања која ће им бити потребна у редакцијама, које пак сваке године пролазе кроз промене под утицајем друштва (публике) и нових информационих и комуникационих технологија.